Lavender Tea

From the teas.co.uk wiki

> **Lavender, in summary:** Floral and divisive, lavender tea has some modest evidence behind it for unwinding and sleep, stronger as aromatherapy than as a drink; blends are the easiest way in.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in May 2026.

Lavender tea is the floral, distinctively perfumed herbal infusion made from the dried flowers of the lavender plant (typically *Lavandula angustifolia*, English lavender). The herb has been used in Mediterranean folk medicine for over 2,500 years and produces one of the most distinctively aromatic herbal teas available; the flavour is polarising, with some drinkers loving the floral perfumed character and others finding it too "soapy" or "perfumy". Lavender's best-known traditional use is for easing tension and winding down, much of it carried by the aroma.

This guide covers everything about lavender tea: the plant heritage, the evidence base, the proper brewing approach, the typical commercial blends, and how to use lavender effectively in a daily routine.

The lavender plant

Lavender is a flowering plant in the mint family (Lamiaceae), native to the Mediterranean region. Several species are used commercially:

- **English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)** the most common culinary and tea variety; sweetest and most floral
- **French lavender (*Lavandula stoechas*)** more aromatic and slightly less sweet; less common in tea
- **Spanish lavender (*Lavandula latifolia*)** more camphoraceous; rarely used in tea
- **Lavandin (*Lavandula* × *intermedia*)** hybrid grown for high oil content; primarily essential oil rather than tea

For brewing, English lavender is the standard. The dried flower buds (picked just before opening) provide the most concentrated flavour and aroma; properly dried lavender retains its purple colour and characteristic aroma for years.

Lavender has been used in Mediterranean folk medicine, perfumery, and culinary applications for over 2,500 years. The Romans used lavender in baths (the name "lavender" comes from the Latin "lavare", to wash), in clothes storage to repel insects, and in early forms of perfume. Modern uses include essential oil

aromatherapy, culinary applications (Provence cuisine, baking), and herbal tea.

The lavender flavour profile

Lavender tea has one of the most distinctive flavour profiles in the herbal world:

- **Strong floral character:** the dominant note; intensely perfumed
- **Slight bitterness:** particularly with longer brewing
- **Soapy or perfumy quality:** for some drinkers; this is part of what makes lavender polarising
- **Pale gold to pale purple tinged cup colour**
- **Powerful aroma:** easily detected even at low concentrations
- **Best in moderation:** lavender is one of the few herbs where less really is more

The polarising character is part of lavender's identity. Drinkers who love the flavour appreciate the perfumed sophistication; drinkers who find it soapy often associate the flavour with cleaning products or fragrance rather than food. Both responses are valid; lavender simply isn't universally appealing the way chamomile or peppermint are.

The "less is more" principle is important. Over brewed or over leafed lavender tea quickly becomes unpleasantly intense; properly balanced lavender tea provides the floral character without overwhelming. Most drinkers benefit from using less lavender than they would for other herbal teas.

Lavender and relaxation

Lavender has long been linked with unwinding, but it is gentle, and a lot of it is about the aroma as much as the cup:

- **A fragrant herb for winding down:** long associated with relaxation, especially through its scent
- **A traditional wind-down cup:** often reached for in the evening as part of winding down
- **The aroma does a lot of the work:** simply smelling the cup as you drink it is part of the effect

The realistic expectation is a gentle, pleasant nudge rather than a treatment. For persistent anxiety or sleep problems, a GP is the right step. See the tea for sleep guide.

How to brew lavender tea properly

Lavender requires careful brewing to avoid over extraction:

1. **Use freshly drawn cold water** brought to a rolling boil and then cooled slightly to 90 to 95°C
2. **Use 1 teaspoon of dried lavender flowers** (loose) or 1 bag of lavender tea per 200ml cup. Use less than for other herbal teas; lavender is concentrated
3. **Steep for 4 to 6 minutes:** shorter than most herbals; over steeping produces unpleasant bitterness and overwhelming perfume character
4. **Strain or remove the bag promptly:** don't leave lavender to over extract
5. **Sweeten with honey if desired:** complementary to the floral character

6. **Drink hot or cold:** lavender works in both

Lavender's water heat, and every other herbal's, is listed in the water temperatures guide.

Lavender in commercial blends

Pure lavender tea is less common in mainstream British retail; lavender more often appears as a supporting ingredient:

- **Sleep blends:** lavender + chamomile + lemon balm + valerian (Pukka Night Time and similar)
- **Earl Grey + lavender:** the bergamot black tea with lavender flowers; produces a distinctively perfumed afternoon tea
- **Lavender + rose:** doubly floral blend popular for special occasion drinking
- **Lavender + chamomile:** dual floral sleep blend
- **French herbal blends:** herbes de Provence style blends sometimes include lavender alongside thyme, rosemary, fennel

For drinkers wanting to try lavender, blends provide accessible introduction without the full intensity of pure lavender tea. For drinkers committed to the lavender flavour, single ingredient lavender tea provides the most direct experience.

Culinary lavender beyond tea

One worth knowing: lavender is widely used in cooking and baking, particularly in Provence style French cuisine and modern bakery applications. Lavender shortbread, lavender lemon cake, lavender ice cream, and lavender honey are all well established culinary uses. For drinkers who enjoy lavender tea, exploring lavender baking provides natural extension of the flavour appreciation.

Importantly, only culinary grade lavender (typically labelled as such) should be used for cooking and tea; ornamental lavender from garden centres may have been treated with pesticides not approved for food use. For home growing, English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) cultivars sold for culinary use are appropriate.

Side effects and considerations

Lavender is generally well tolerated:

- **Endocrine effects (rare and high dose)** some sources flag concerns about lavender essential oil's potential mild estrogenic effects in pre pubescent children; we don't give age or dose advice for children; ask a pharmacist, health visitor or GP
- **Drug interactions:** no significant interactions at typical cup amounts
- **Pregnancy:** lavender included, herbal tea in pregnancy should stop at four cups a day under NHS advice; ask your midwife if unsure
- **Allergies:** lavender allergies exist but are uncommon

For most adults drinking lavender tea day to day, side effects at ordinary cup amounts are uncommon.

What we stock

Browse the herbal tea range. Lavender containing products on teas.co.uk:

- Pukka Organic Night Time, sleep blend with lavender alongside chamomile and lemon balm

For comparisons across the wider herbal tea landscape, see also: Pukka, Twinings, Clipper, Yogi, Heath & Heather.

Why lavender is worth a look

Lavender tea is the floral, polarising herbal that's worth knowing about even if you don't end up loving it. The combination of distinctive aromatic character, modest, evidence based help with relaxation, and broad cultural use across Mediterranean traditions makes it one of the more interesting herbal teas to try at least once.

For drinkers who like the lavender flavour, a regular cup is a pleasant, modest part of an evening routine. For drinkers who find the flavour soapy or unpleasant, lavender's effects can still be accessed through aromatherapy (essential oil diffusers, lavender scented sleep products) without requiring tea drinking.

The blends are the practical introduction for most British drinkers; pure lavender tea is for committed lavender fans willing to engage with the full intensity of the flavour. Pukka Night Time and similar bedtime blends put lavender alongside other herbs that soften its perfumed character.

Buying lavender tea in the UK

Pure single ingredient lavender tea is rare on mainstream British supermarket shelves; the strong floral character is too polarising for the typical mass market tea aisle, so most UK drinkers come to it through Earl Grey + lavender variants or bedtime blends that pair lavender with chamomile and lemon balm. Specialty herbal retailers and well chosen independent tea shops carry single origin lavender from Provence and from English growers; for the teapot, look for English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) labelled as culinary grade.

The teas.co.uk herbal tea range includes the major lavender containing sleep blends; the wider teas.co.uk shop carries the Earl Grey + lavender variants where stocked. UK delivery is free above £35, and the per cup price on each lavender product card is the easy way to compare pack sizes and brands. For drinkers who use lavender most evenings, a bedtime blend usually works out cheaper per cup than buying single ingredient loose lavender separately.

Lavender versus the other floral and bedtime herbals

- **Versus chamomile** both are floral evening herbs; chamomile is honey soft and gently sweet, lavender is intensely perfumed and polarising. Chamomile is universally drinkable; lavender requires a taste for it
- **Versus lemon balm** lemon balm is bright and lemony with mint family heritage; lavender is perfumed and floral. The two combine effectively in sleep blends
- **Versus valerian** valerian has stronger sleep evidence but a much more polarising flavour (earthy, almost cheesy); lavender is at least floral pleasant even at its most divisive

- **Versus a hibiscus or rose floral blend** hibiscus is tart and red, rose is gently sweet and floral; lavender is more aromatically intense than either
- **Versus honeybush** honeybush gives gentle natural sweetness without floral perfume; better for drinkers who find lavender too intense

Frequently asked questions

Why does lavender tea taste soapy? The same volatile aroma compounds (linalool and linalyl acetate) that make lavender popular in soap, perfume, and cleaning products are present in the tea. If you associate the smell with cleaning, the cup will read soapy; if you associate it with Provence cooking or aromatherapy, it will read pleasantly floral.

Will lavender tea help me sleep? Gently. Its relaxing reputation rests more on the aroma than on the tea itself, but a warm cup while winding down suits the evening. Smelling the cup as you drink it is part of the effect. See the best tea for sleep guide.

Is lavender tea safe in pregnancy? Lavender is caffeine free, but that alone does not make it suitable in pregnancy: the NHS advice is no liquorice root and at most 4 cups of lavender or other herbal tea daily, and your midwife or pharmacist can help if unsure. Avoid concentrated lavender essential oil ingestion during pregnancy.

Can I make lavender tea from garden lavender? Only if you can confirm the variety is English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and it has not been treated with pesticides not approved for food use. Ornamental garden centre lavender is often sprayed; only culinary grade lavender is appropriate for tea or cooking.

Why does my lavender tea taste bitter? Almost always over extraction; lavender brewed too strong or too long becomes harshly bitter. Use less leaf than for other herbals, brew shorter (4 to 6 minutes maximum), and remove the bag promptly. The "less is more" rule really matters with lavender.

Can I make a lavender latte? Yes; brew strong lavender tea, sweeten with a small amount of honey, top with steamed milk. The floral character pairs naturally with dairy. Some specialty cafes serve lavender London Fog (Earl Grey + lavender + steamed milk) as a signature drink.

What food pairs with lavender tea? Shortbread, lemon cake, honey cake, almond biscuits, soft cheeses with honey. The floral character bridges sweet and savoury comfortably; avoid pairing with strong flavoured foods that compete with the perfume.

Lavender in the British evening routine

For drinkers who like the flavour, lavender tea fits the early evening or pre bedtime slot, often alongside chamomile and lemon balm in a bedtime blend. Realistically it is part of winding down, not a knockout for sleep; brewing, smelling and slowly drinking a hot cup is much of what makes the routine work.

For drinkers who do not care for lavender as a tea but want what it's known for, lavender essential oil diffused in the bedroom or applied to a pillow provides the aromatherapy benefit without requiring the cup. For drinkers building a full evening tea cupboard alongside whatever they keep for the morning Yorkshire Tea or Twinings English Breakfast, a sensible evening kit includes chamomile, peppermint for after dinner, a bedtime blend such as Pukka Night Time, and something with lavender for the floral nights.

For the wider context see the herbal tea overview, the chamomile overview, the lemon balm overview, the valerian overview, the honeybush overview, the best tea for sleep guide, the ultimate caffeine guide, and the Pukka deep dive.

What you need to know: lavender tea

Aspect	Short answer
What it is	Infusion of dried English lavender (Lavandula angustifolia)
Taste	Intensely floral, polarising, soapy if over-brewed
Evidence	Modest relaxation/sleep; stronger as aromatherapy than tea
Brewing	Less leaf than other herbals, 4-6 min, do not over-steep
Best form	Blends (Lavender Earl Grey, Lavender Chamomile)
Framing	Part of winding down, not a sleep drug

Related teas worth a look: English Breakfast, Earl Grey, green tea, loose leaf tea, Darjeeling, oolong, and herbal tea. The full tea shop is open for lavender blends and more, with free UK delivery past £35.

FROM THE CURATOR

teas · Lavender blends vary in price, so compare them per cup. Loose flowers usually win, though supermarket lavender blends sometimes do.

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